

# Program Implementation Guide for Care and Information Providers

Good Questions  
for Your Patients'  
Good Health



Partnership for  
Clear Health Communication

# Improving Clear Health Communication With *Ask Me 3*

*A guide to using Ask Me 3 resources*

[www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org)

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Welcome to **Ask Me 3**! This Implementation Guide provides tips on using the **Ask Me 3** program in your day-to-day work with patients and/or other constituents.

**Ask Me 3** is a program provided by the **Partnership for Clear Health Communication**, a coalition of national organizations that are working together to promote awareness and solutions around the issue of low health literacy and its effect on health outcomes.

**Ask Me 3** is designed to enhance communication between providers and patients. Patients should be encouraged to understand the answers to 3 questions:

- 1. What is my main problem?**
- 2. What do I need to do?**
- 3. Why is it important for me to do this?**

Along with encouraging your patients to use the **Ask Me 3** approach, simple techniques can increase your patients' comfort level with asking questions, as well as compliance with your instructions after they leave appointments.

More information on **Ask Me 3** can be obtained at [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org).

### **WHY IMPLEMENT ASK ME 3?**

**Health literacy** – the ability to *read, understand* and *act upon* health information – is now known to be vital to good patient care and positive health outcomes. When patients lack the ability to understand and act upon medical information, it can put their health at risk.

Conversely, the ability to understand and act upon health information empowers patients and supports the efforts of health care providers, which ultimately leads to an increase in positive health outcomes.

### **WHO SHOULD USE THIS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE?**

This guide can serve as an invaluable resource to *providers of care* and *providers of information*.

- It provides access to tools and resources to help your practice communicate with people under your care in a way that can better help them understand and act upon your diagnoses and instructions, ultimately improving their health outcomes.
- It also provides tools on how to help people with low health literacy, and helps you find the most current research on its impact. Further, the guide offers access to tools that can be used for in-service staff training, as well as information on how to locate local literacy services nationwide.

## ***ASK ME 3 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, TOOLS AND RESOURCES***

The **Ask Me 3** program offers a variety of easy-to-use educational materials for patients, providers and health-concerned organizations in both English and Spanish. All can be ordered using the order form at the end of this guide, by visiting [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org), or by calling 1-877-4-ASK-ME-3:

- A **Poster** reminds and encourages patients to “Ask 3”, so they are sure they understand what they need to do for good health.
- A **Patient Brochure** educates patients about the **Ask Me 3** program and motivates them to ask their doctor, nurse or pharmacist the 3 questions to more effectively manage their health. This brochure also provides a tear-out **Ask Me 3** reminder wallet card and a preparation checklist for their next visit to a medical office or clinic.
- An **Organization Brochure**, developed for organizations whose constituents are providers of care or providers of health information, facilitates understanding of organizations’ complementary roles in advancing health literacy with other health professionals.
- A **Provider Brochure** explains the scope and impact of low health literacy, and how it may affect communication within their practice.

In addition, a number of other health literacy tools and resources can be downloaded free of charge via [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org), including:

- A bibliography of research and evidence on health literacy.
- A list of literacy resources, including links to literacy-support websites and referral services.
- A comprehensive white paper detailing the scope and impact of the health literacy problem.
- Links to websites for a variety of consumer, public health, health care, academic, literacy, advocacy, caregiver and policy-maker organizations, including members of the Partnership for Clear Health Communication.
- An order form for a health literacy “practice support kit” with a continuing medical education program from the American Medical Association Foundation.
- A cultural competency primer from the National Medical Association.
- Explanations of interaction techniques and examples of simple interventions to help providers increase their patients’ ability to understand and act upon health information.

## ***INTEGRATING ASK ME 3 INTO YOUR PRACTICE OR ORGANIZATION***

There are many ways you can integrate Ask Me 3 tools and resources into your practice or organization to improve communication with patients. Improved communication can help increase your patients' ability to understand and act upon the information you provide, ultimately improving their health incomes.

The first step is to order more materials using the order form at the end of this guide, by visiting [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org), or by calling 1-877-4-ASK-ME-3.

Once you have these materials, consider implementing any or all of the following approaches to integrating clearer health communication into your practice....or come up with your own!

*Here are some easy and productive ways to get started....*

- Visit [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org) for comprehensive background to help you better understand or explain the health literacy issue.
- Meet with your colleagues and staff to identify the implications of health literacy to your organization.
- Use the prevalence calculator available at [www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com](http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com). It's a great tool that can help you and your staff to identify the potential percentage of your patient population that has low health literacy and, therefore, may need additional help understanding and acting upon medical information and instructions.
  - Some people with low health literacy use well-practiced coping mechanisms that effectively mask their problem. Chances are that some of your patients are among the 90 million people in the United States who may be at risk due to difficulty understanding and acting on health information.
- Conduct an in-service training for your staff on the low health literacy issue, and on using tools available via **Ask Me 3** to help improve communication with patients.
- Perform an audit of the points of contact – written, visual and verbal – that your practice has with its patients both inside and outside of the practice environment. The more you learn about health literacy, the better equipped your practice will be to determine if these communications are easy for patients to understand. For example, if all of your written materials are in English, but 1/3 of your patient base speaks Spanish, it's possible that these materials are unclear to some of your patients.
  - Create an audit that reflects the specific needs of your practice and its patients. Some of the areas you may want to examine include:
    - How information is provided to patients
    - The reading level of the written materials you provide, such as medication instructions
    - Your protocols for patient follow up and questions

*There are numerous other ways to creatively integrate **Ask Me 3** into your daily work:*

Review the brochures written especially for you!

- Depending on whether you provide health care or information, order and review copies of the Ask Me 3 brochures prepared especially for you – either the organization brochure or the provider brochure. Both brochures explain the scope and impact of low health literacy, the importance of clear health communication, and the benefits of Ask Me 3.

Share the patient brochure!

- The highly informative patient brochure educates patients about the Ask Me 3 program, and how using the three questions can help them better communicate with doctors, nurses, physicians assistants, pharmacists and other health care or information providers.
- The brochure includes a punch-out **Ask Me 3** reminder wallet card as well as a checklist of preparation steps for their next visit to your office or clinic.
- You can share it with patients by:
  - Using the eye-catching brochure display available from [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org), or 1-877-4-ASK-ME-3
  - Handing it out with any instructions or insurance paperwork upon a patient's departure from your office
  - Conducting a special mailing to patients
  - Hand out and discuss the brochure during a health fair or event

Hang the poster!

- The Ask Me 3 program offers a poster that can be used to stimulate curiosity about **Ask Me 3**, and inform patients and staff about the program. Hang the poster:
  - In your waiting room
  - In the examination room
  - On the ceiling, above the examination table
  - On a door
  - In a bathroom
  - In a staff break room
  - Anywhere patients might see it!

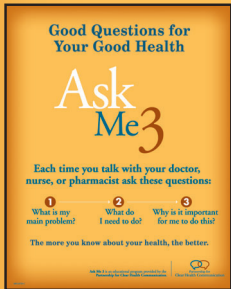
Request a speaker!

- Call 1-877-4-ASK-ME-3 to request a member of the Partnership for Clear Health Communication to speak to a group of your patients about:
  - “The importance of **Ask Me 3**”
  - “Improving your health literacy”
  - “Taking control of your own health outcomes”
- Or, request a speaker who can talk to you and your local medical society, allied health professionals or even local employers or civic organizations about low health literacy, and integrating **Ask Me 3** into your practice or organization.

# Ask Me3

Because clear communication is the foundation of patients being able to *understand* and *act* on health information, the **Partnership for Clear Health Communication** has launched **Ask Me 3** — a quick, effective tool to improve health communication between patients and providers. Educational materials to support the program are described below and may be ordered at [www.AskMe3.org](http://www.AskMe3.org), by calling 1-877-4-ASK-ME-3, or by mailing the form on the reverse side of this document.

## Poster



This poster can be used to stimulate curiosity about Ask Me 3 and inform patients and staff about the program.

Hanging this poster in waiting rooms, lobbies, and/or exam rooms makes it more comfortable for patients to ask about Ask Me 3 and may motivate them to use the 3 questions to improve communication and understanding.

MK124723-C *English version*

MK124723-D *Spanish version*

## Patient Brochure



This informative brochure (which has been developed using design and writing guidelines to enhance clear health communication) will educate patients about the Ask

Me 3 program and motivate them to ask their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist the 3 questions to more effectively manage their health. This brochure also provides a tear-out reminder wallet card and a preparation checklist so patients know their role in improving communication with their providers.

MK124723-E *English version*

MK124723-F *Spanish version*

## Brochure Display



An eye-catching display that holds the patient brochure and engages patients in Ask Me 3.

## Organization Brochure

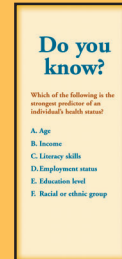


This brochure was developed for organizations whose constituents are providers of care or providers of health information. The brochure explains the scope and impact of low health literacy, the importance of clear health communication, and how organizations can be involved in the movement. This will facilitate understanding of organizations' complementary roles in advancing health literacy with other health professionals.

MK124723-V *English version*

MK124723-AR *Spanish version*

## Provider Brochure



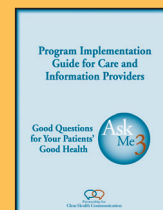
This brochure has been specifically developed for the health care provider to explain the scope and impact of low health literacy and how it may affect

communication within their practice. Communication tips are also offered, with emphasis on Ask Me 3 and how using this solution can positively impact patient health outcomes.

MK124723-G *English version*

MK124723-H *Spanish version*

## Program Implementation Guide



This guide targets health care providers and organizations with explanations and tips on how to implement

the Ask Me 3 program in their day-to-day work with patients and/or other constituents.

MK124723-T *English only*

## Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	STOCK#	QUANTITY
<b>Poster</b> <i>Shrink-wrapped in packs of 3, Maximum order amount: 2 packs</i>	MK124723-C <i>English version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 6
	MK124723-D <i>Spanish version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 6
<b>Patient Brochure</b> <i>Shrink-wrapped in packs of 25, Maximum order amount: 4 packs</i>	MK124723-E <i>English version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 75 <input type="checkbox"/> 100
	MK124723-F <i>Spanish version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 75 <input type="checkbox"/> 100
<b>Organization Brochure</b> <i>Maximum order amount: 50 brochures</i>	MK124723-V <i>English version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 50
	MK124723-AR <i>Spanish version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 50
<b>Provider Brochure</b> <i>Shrink-wrapped in packs of 10, Maximum order amount: 2 packs</i>	MK124723-G <i>English version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 20
	MK124723-H <i>Spanish version</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 20
<b>Program Implementation Guide</b> <i>Maximum order amount: 2 guides</i>	MK124723-T <i>English only</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2

Please mail all orders to:  
The Clear Health Communication Team  
PO BOX 14147  
Saint Louis MO 63178-9990

Or fax this form to:  
1-314-993-8454

If you wish to order larger quantities  
than those listed, please email  
your request to Kelly Abbondandolo  
at [askme3@fleishman.com](mailto:askme3@fleishman.com).



Partnership for  
Clear Health Communication



**Ask Me 3** is an educational program provided by the **Partnership for Clear Health Communication** to promote clear communication between health care providers and patients.

**The Partnership for Clear Health Communication** is a coalition of national organizations that are working together to promote awareness and solutions around the issue of low health literacy and its effect on health outcomes. The Partnership serves consumers, public health officials, health care professionals, health educators, literacy specialists, patient advocates and caregivers, health associations and policymakers. The Partnership and its individual members are committed to offering free and low-cost resources and programs that deliver patient information, medical education and practice management tools to care and information providers.



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